CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method comprising:

    a) generating a first light signal adjacent a pathway of an automated banking machine with a light source, wherein the light signal includes an intensity that changes over time in a first pattern, wherein the automated banking machine includes a cash dispenser;

    b) detecting the first light signal with a light detector positioned adjacent the pathway;

    c) determining with the machine that the intensity of the detected first light signal varies in time with a pattern that corresponds to the first pattern; and

    d) responsive to (c) moving at least one item through the pathway.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the at least one item includes a sheet of currency.

3.   The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

e)   detecting a second light signal with the light detector; and

f)   determining with the machine that the intensity of the detected second light signal does not have an intensity that varies in time with a pattern that corresponds to the

5   first pattern.

4.   The method according to claim 3, further comprising:

g)   generating a message responsive to (f);

h)   sending with the machine the message to a remote server.

5.   The method according to claim 3, further comprising:

10   g)   placing the automated banking machine in an out of service state.

6.   The method according to claim 1, wherein a sensor circuit includes the light source and the light detector, further comprising:

e)   periodically calibrating the sensor circuit.

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7.   The method according to claim 6, wherein step (e) includes:

f)   turning the light source off;

g)   detecting a second light signal with the light detector;

h)   determining with the sensor circuit a baseline voltage value associated with the

5   detected second light signal;

i)   operating the light source to produce a third light signal with a range of light

intensities;

j)   detecting the third light signal with the light detector;

k)   determining with the sensor circuit a maximum voltage level value associated

10   with the detected third light signal;

l)   determining with the sensor circuit a lower threshold value responsive to at least

one of the baseline voltage value and the maximum voltage value.

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8.   The method according to claim 7, wherein (c) includes:

   m)   generating a voltage value associated with the first light signal using the sensor circuit;

5   n)   determining that the voltage value associated with the second light signal is at least one of equal to or greater than the lower threshold value.

9.   The method according to claim 7, further comprising:

   m)   detecting a second light signal with the light detector;

   n)   generating a voltage value associated with the second light signal using the sensor

10   circuit;

   o)   determining that the voltage value associated with the second light signal is at least one of equal to or less than the lower threshold value; and

   p)   generating a message with the machine representative of the passageway being

15   blocked.

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10.   The method according to claim 7, further comprising:

   m)   determining a re-calibration threshold value between the lower threshold value and the maximum voltage value;

   n)   detecting a second light signal with the light detector;

5   o)   generating a voltage value associated with the second light signal using the sensor circuit;

   p)   determining that the voltage value associated with the second light signal is at least one of equal to or less than the threshold value;

10   k)   re-performing (e).

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